

Dr. Ash's claims were made at a press conference. Walter Pincus, Washington correspondent for the Durham (N.C.) Morning Herald, called Hill and Knowlton, Inc., for comment on Dr. Ash's statement that American cigarette companies were cooperating with the physician.

DURHAM MORNING HERALD
Durham, North Carolina
November 26, 1959

Radioactive Leaf Report Disputed

By WALTER PINCUS
Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON — A mushrooming cloud of doubt has risen over a Canadian doctor's statements here on radioactivity in tobacco smoke.

Dr. Arthur Edward Michael Ash met with reporters Tuesday to unveil his new method for steaming radioactive particles from tobacco. Radioactivity in cigarette smoke, the doctor said, may be the link between lung cancer and tobacco usage.



PINCUS

In his prepared statement the doctor said, "Studies by Coghill and Hobbs of Duke University revealed that cigarette tobacco smoke contains 670 microcuries per gram, a degree of radioactivity too high for public consumption."

Contacted Wednesday, Dr. Marcus E. Hobbs of Duke called Dr. Ash's statement "not a factual report of the paper's finding."

Dr. Hobbs said, "We did not measure radioactivity at all." The 1957 study, he stated, concerned itself with potassium in tobacco leaf and found that only "half of 1 per cent of the potassium in the leaf is transferred to the smoke by normal cigarette smoking."

Hobbs said these results led to the conclusion that further study of radioactive material in cigarettes was unnecessary.

In another portion of his Tuesday statement, Dr. Ash stated "both British and American cigarette industries are cooperating in (his) research." Hill and Knowlton, public relations advisors to the Tobacco Institute Trade Assn. for U.S. Manufacturers, strongly denied

Wednesday there was any cooperation or support at all for the Ash project.

A representative of the Department of Agriculture's tobacco division, who attended Ash's Tuesday conference, said he has furnished the Agriculture Research Service a copy of the doctor's presentation for their study. The department official said he was unable to evaluate Ash's claims but said he believed Ash "singled out tobacco because he had something to sell."

Harry Guinivan of Washington Industrial Research Consultants, Inc., Dr. Ash's public relation's advisers here, said the new research group to be formed by Dr. Ash would "sell the process" of steaming tobacco to rid it of radioactivity "to cigarette manufacturers and processors."

Asked how much Dr. Ash would charge for his process, Guinivan replied, "He wants a cent a pound to lease his machine" which does the steaming, "and a million dollars to carry on his work in research."

"I don't know whether he'll get it," Guinivan added.

The "Coghill" referred to in the Duke tobacco studies was identified as Everett Coghill, formerly with Duke and now on the research staff of American Tobacco Co. at Richmond, Va.

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Tobacco 'Steamed' In Cancer Research

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — A Canadian physician announced he has started an American research organization to help "steam" radioactive materials from cigarette tobacco.

Dr. Arthur Edward Michael Ash, a member of England's Royal College of Surgeons, said he has been steaming cigarette tobacco for the past two years with encouraging results.

He said the tobacco, after the steaming process, "is still smokable although it loses a little bit of the taste. Manufacturers say it is buyable."

"We know that radioactivity can produce lung cancer," Ash said, "and that commercial tobacco used in cigarette manufacture contains a higher concentration of the radioactive potassium isotope K-40 than any other plant so far examined."

Ash said there are three reasons why tobacco contains so much radioactive material. He blamed potassium and rubidium, which he called natural factors, the increased use of fertilizers and fallout from increased bomb testings.

DURHAM MORNING HERALD
Durham, North Carolina
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Canadian Doctor Starts New Fight On Lung Cancer

By WALTER PINCUS
Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Dr. Arthur Edward Michael Ash, a Canadian doctor, told a press conference Tuesday he was setting out to fight lung cancer by eliminating radioactivity from tobacco smoke. But a spokesman for the Tobacco Institute disclaimed U.S. manufacturers were cooperating in any way with Dr. Ash's scheme for "cleaning" tobacco.

Dr. Ash's main weapons, he announced, will be steam which he forces through "dirty tobacco" to eliminate whatever it is that causes tobacco smoke to give off radioactive particles. The resultant tobacco, he said, was

smokable and to prove it he passed around a peace-pipe full.

Dressed in typically British striped pants, Dr. Ash lectured a small but skeptical group of reporters on his radioactive smoke theory.

He stressed that studies at Duke University had shown that cigarette tobacco smoke contains 670 micro-curiosities per gram.

"A degree of radioactivity too high for public consumption," he added. That's where tars and nicotine may not cause lung cancer, radioactivity does.

Tobacco radioactivity, Dr. Ash said, comes from potassium isotopes and rubidium in the leaf itself, increased use of radioactive fertilizers in growing, and fallout from atom testing.

His studies, Dr. Ash said, had proved "conclusively" that commercial tobacco contained a high concentration of radioactive potassium.

A letter to Dr. Ash from the Imperial Tobacco Co. of Canada, however, disputed these results.